



Thakeham Parish Council



Annual Report: April 2009 – March 2010

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The year under review has been busy with the workload handled by a very committed council and supported by an extremely hard working clerk. The council welcomed Alison Knight to fill a vacancy at the January meeting.

In line with Quality Council status, the full council has met at least monthly, with the planning committee meeting regularly to deal with new applications and monitor enforcement actions. The open spaces committee met as per its terms of reference. Councillors have attended and reported on many other meetings throughout the term including HALC (Horsham Association of Local Councils) and the CLC (Chanctonbury Local Committee). The council agreed to support the Greening Campaign – an initiative to reduce carbon emission and supported by our local MP – and sponsored a public meeting in September. The Greening Thakeham committee has subsequently agreed to join forces with Storrington and Sullington and work is ongoing.

Communication with parishioners is a high priority for the council, and public meetings were called during the year where matters required such course of action. The parish website has been regularly updated with latest news and links and proves an effective method of communication. The comments section is often used to communicate with the council. Notice boards situated around the parish are regularly updated. The council commissions a newsletter on a quarterly basis and following serious issues with the original provider, the arrangement was terminated last July. Although previously produced at no cost to the parish by carrying a high level of advertising, the newsletter is now printed locally and delivered at the required time by councillors to help minimise cost – only a few outlying addresses are posted. The means of production and circulation of the newsletter will be further reviewed.

The prospect of landfill at Laybrook dominated much of the year. Concerned residents filled the village hall for a public meeting last August. The applicants along with WSCC made presentations to the meeting that was also attended by Nick Herbert MP and both County and District councillors. The parish council along with several hundred local residents lodged strong objections to the original plans which were later resubmitted following a legal challenge. The revised plans were then withdrawn by Cory in March – news that was very well received. While the immediate threat has diminished, the council is aware that risk remains and will continue to appraise the situation, acting accordingly.

The situation with the mushroom sites has also taken up a lot of council time. A period of apparent inactivity followed the November 2008 public exhibition that detailed proposals for the sites. A number of meetings involving nominated representatives of the parish council and HDC, sometimes with representation from the landowners and their agents took place in line with the agreed pro-active approach. While the parish council attended in a listening capacity only, it encouraged dialogue that worked towards consultation with the community. Revised plans for the sites taking account of feedback from the earlier exhibition were presented in March. This project will no doubt dominate the work of the council in the coming months.

An auction of farmland and woodland created a lot of worry in Thakeham in February and an exceptional meeting was called that agreed actions to be taken. Although much of the land was purchased by local residents, the matter is not currently fully resolved and another auction is to take place for land further sub-divided. The concept is one that has caused concern for the council and is likely to be pursued.



With significant changes in the economy, a survey of local needs for affordable housing was undertaken by Action in Rural Sussex. The findings of the survey are due to be presented at the April 2010 council meeting.

Efforts to re-establish the footpath between Furze Common Road and High Bar Lane were thwarted when the Inspector dismissed the application following a public hearing held last September. Expert advice was that a new application should be made rather than challenge the Inspector's decision. An appeal is underway for evidence from users of the footpath that have not resided in Furze Common Road or had any connection with the mushroom business. WSCC have undertaken significant works on other footpaths, notably safe steps up the bank opposite Abingworth Hall and also from the Street into the Glebe field. Repairs have also been undertaken to the fence along Woodlands Way that forms part of a safe route to school. The parish council made a financial contribution toward the travel plan study that had been commissioned by Thakeham First School and the head teacher presented the background to the council's June meeting. Councillor Brown was elected to fill a vacancy on the school's Board of Governors which will improve dialogue between both parties and assist in any actions arising from the travel plan. Severe winter weather caused disruption in Thakeham and councillors in conjunction with other authorities are working toward a coordinated plan that should make the village better able to cope in similar conditions.

The parish council has in the past made donations to the West Chiltington and Thakeham Cricket club and an invitation was taken up last May to the inauguration of the new net facility that is well used by youngsters from the village. A donation was also made to the Purple Bus which is a mobile facility popular with youngsters. It is due to start coming to Thakeham again this year.

Last April's Thakeham spring clean, although not as well attended as in previous years, was assisted by the Highway Rangers from WSCC. Their attendance allowed for some more major tasks to be undertaken on the day that would not otherwise have been possible.

The parish council laid a wreath at the war memorial in St Mary's churchyard on Remembrance Sunday as in previous years. The service was very well attended.

The tasks and challenges facing the council will prove interesting but Parishioners can rest assured that the council will work to the best of its ability for the future of Thakeham.

Dave Berry – Chairman, Thakeham Parish Council

Planning Committee Report

The planning committee reviewed 35 applications this year including the 2 submitted for landfill at Laybrook. These, together with issues related to the land for sale at auction (referred to in the Chairman's report) took up much of the committee's time.

Most applications were of a minor nature and included 6 for tree surgery and minor amendments in the parish's conservation area. Of the more significant or controversial applications, the committee's recommendations were usually in accord with the final decisions made in Horsham District Council (HDC). Where our committee has a strong objection to an application and HDC's planning officers recommend approval, we try to attend HDC's Development Control planning meeting to make use of the 2 minute slot we are allowed to put forward our views. We attended 3 of these meetings during the year.

The Ancient Woodland Inventory for West Sussex was published in January which identified most of the small woods in Thakeham as being ancient (measured by plant diversity) which gives an added tool in our efforts to protect them.

Karen Dawes – Chair, Planning Committee

Open Spaces Committee Report

The committee met every two months throughout the year with the objective of ensuring our open spaces are properly maintained, safe and clean for the benefit of all residents and visitors.

The High Bar Lane playground is inspected regularly and maintenance works have been undertaken throughout the year. There are several pieces of equipment which may need replacing in the near future and the Council has made financial provision to cover such eventualities. The area continues to be very well used by a large number of children.

Unfortunately the parish has again suffered from a number of cases of vandalism during the period. Clearly such behaviour is unacceptable and is always reported to the police. The cost of any repairs or replacements needed as a result of these occurrences is borne by the Council so it would be helpful if all residents could be vigilant in trying to prevent any further incidents.

We will strive to maintain and improve open spaces facilities throughout the parish and I would like to thank all members of the committee for their contributions during this year.

Norman Prince – Chair, Open Spaces Committee

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

	Year ending	
	31 March 2009 £	31 March 2010 £
Receipts:		
Precept	31,100	31,550
Interest	651	4
Grants	1,253	1,494
VAT refunds	1,451	1,717
Total	<u>34,455</u>	<u>34,765</u>
Payments:		
Staff costs	18,910	20,078
Office expenses	2,061	2,222
Insurance	1,181	1,156
Audit	285	285
Village events	96	254
Parish Communications/Website	656	881
Playground equipment	6,647	0
Outdoor maintenance	6,852	3,824
Churchyard maintenance	1,060	1,100
Village Hall subsidy	2,116	266
S.137 payments	0	700
Other donations	0	200
VAT payments	2,163	390
Miscellaneous	14	14
Total	<u>42,041</u>	<u>31,370</u>
Balances brought forward	29,633	22,047
Surplus/(Deficit) in year	-7,586	3,395
Balances carried forward	22,047	25,442

COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM 17TH MAY 2010

Chairman

Mr John Weight	Field House, The Street, Thakeham RH20 3EP Tel: 01798 815512 john.weight@btinternet.com	Ex officio all committees CLC Parish Plan Implementation AC Communications
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Vice Chairman

Mr Stephen Kirby	17 Linfield Copse, Thakeham RH20 3EU Tel: 01798 815089 sjk2008@hotmail.co.uk	Ex officio all committees
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Councillors

Mr John Bearman	Homelea, 10 Crescent Rise, Thakeham RH20 3NB Tel: 01903 744971 johnbearman47@hotmail.com	HALC Open Spaces Committee Parish Plan Implementation AC Police
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Mr Roger Brown	Thakeham Lodge, Crays Lane, Thakeham, RH20 3ER Tel: 01798 812678 rogerfbrown@btinternet.com	Planning Committee Open Spaces Committee
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Mrs Lavinia Bunyan	Church View, The Street, Thakeham RH20 3EP Tel: 01798 815968 indab@me.com	Planning Committee Open Spaces Committee Sport and Leisure
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Ms Karen Dawes	The Old Rectory, The Street, Thakeham, RH20 3EP Tel: 01798 815636 beandawes@yahoo.co.uk	Planning Committee
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Ms Alison Knight	No. 1 The Old Post Office, The Street, Thakeham, RH20 3EP Tel: 01798 815181 alikhnight@hotmail.co.uk	Communications
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Mr Dave MacEachern	28 Furze Common Road, Thakeham RH20 3EG Tel: 01798 815722	CLC Laybrook Landfill WP Minerals Liaison Group Village Hall Committee Planning Committee Youth Health
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Mr Norman Prince	3 Town House Cottages, Thakeham RH20 3EW Tel: 01798 813064 normanpri@hotmail.com	HALC Open Spaces Committee Parish Plan Implementation AC Tree Warden Footpath Warden
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Mr Rod Walker	Highfield, The Street, Thakeham RH20 3EP Tel: 01798 812802 rod_walker@btopenworld.com	Planning Committee Parish Plan Implementation AC Highways and Transport
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Officers

Clerk to the Council

Mr John Denman	The Parish Office, Thakeham Parish Council Storrington Road, Thakeham RH20 3EJ Tel: 01798 815305 clerk@thakehampc.plus.com (Office hours 09:00 – 12:00, Mon – Fri)
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